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RUEKJCS/DIA WASHDC 0187
RHHJJAA/JICPAC PEARL HARBOR HI 0088
RUCGEVC/JOINT STAFF WASHDC 0133
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 SHENYANG 000220

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR EAP/K, EAP/CM, INR, PRM, DRL
BANGKOK FOR REFCOORD
MOSCOW PASS TO VLADIVOSTOK

E.O. 12958: DECL: TEN YEARS AFTER KOREAN UNIFICATION
TAGS: [CH](#) [KN](#) [KS](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PREF](#) [PREL](#) [RS](#) [SOCI](#)
SUBJECT: PRC-DPRK BORDER: BRIBES SOFTEN LAWS ON REFUGEES,
ORPHAN SCHOOLING

REF: A. SEOUL 1170
[1](#)B. SHENYANG 142
[1](#)C. SHENYANG 119

Classified By: Consul General Stephen B. Wickman. Reasons 1.4(b/d).

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: A new consulate contact with family ties to one of South Korea's more conservative and recognized DPRK defector NGOs reports that Chinese government and security officials are willing to turn a blind eye to their operations to shelter-in-place undocumented North Koreans who want to stay in China, requiring only modest bribes. Among other benefits, he says this allows "stateless orphans" and children of North Korean refugees to legally obtain Chinese residency rights and schooling. Our contact said that the "underground railroad" of helping DPRK refugees escape to third countries was controlled by for-profit brokers, who could be severely punished if caught.
END SUMMARY.

[1](#)2. (U) ConGenOff traveled to Jilin Province's Yanbian Korean Autonomous Prefecture and Mudanjiang City in Heilongjiang Province December 6-15 to meet local contacts.

CHINESE GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS: MONEY TALKS

[1](#)3. (C) Tai Zhongyuen, a Yanji-based Sino-Korean pastor who is the brother-in-law of Seoul-based Free North Korea Radio founder and DPRK defector Kim Seong-min (Ref A) said that, in general, he no longer feared Chinese government or Public Security Bureau (PSB) interference in his work to help North Koreans. He said the era when ideology reigned was long gone and Chinese bureaucrats were so money-hungry that now he could avoid penalties by paying "fines" or other fees, which some might view as bribes, to maintain safe operations. Tai said that he had been dealing with PSB officials since the late 1980s, when he first practiced Christianity in China, and that the change had occurred long ago.

[1](#)4. (C) Tai claimed that most Chinese laws dealing with assistance to North Koreans and religious outreach fell under public security nuisance laws and were punishable by fines. This is a clear contrast to some financial crimes, fraud, and crimes against the state, which are covered by state security laws and punished via prison time. He said that the penalties are only RMB 500-5000 for people merely

helping and sheltering illegal North Korean aliens. However, if a local Chinese is arrested for assisting North Koreans with the ultimate goal of defection to a third country, prison time was probable and that refoulement was possible.

"STATELESS ORPHANS" ATTEND SCHOOL AFTER SMALL BRIBES

15. (C) As for obtaining a "hukou," or residency permit, for a North Korean "stateless orphan," usually the child of a North Korean mother and a deceased or disabled Chinese father (Ref B), Tai said that it was a very easy and regular procedure. During the week of December 7, one of Tai's church employees moved an 8-year old "stateless orphan" onto a Chinese hukou with a small bribe of RMB 200 (USD 35). He said that the PSB did not take any money at all but that the Prefectural Education Department's Educational and Life Division asked for the payment of a "fine" for "late reporting of the child's birth/family adoption."

16. (C) The Educational and Life Division first asked for a RMB 7000 fine, but the church employee coolly responded that there was no way on earth he could come up with that sum. Then the Department asked for RMB 1000, to which the church employee retorted that he could just drop the child on the steps of the Civil Affairs Bureau and declare the child a "ward of the state." Then the officials lowered their asking fee to RMB 200, which the employee gladly paid. The child is now attending school. Tai said that money solved everything in China and that officials knew that it was in

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their best interests to ask for and receive small bribes, rather than turn in people that they would not get credit for.

BROKER NETWORK SHUTTLES NEW ARRIVALS

17. (C) Tai said that the defector network was firmly in the hands of "professionals" (Ref C) and that he rarely knew about or heard about new arrivals, saying that "the North Korean refugees know more than we do before even crossing the Tumen." He said that the North Koreans he assisted were those who legally exited North Korea and were now violating the terms of their North Korean exit visa. He cited one example in which his church is working with a North Korean student who is a year overdue in returning home from Yanbian University. He said that the penalties for returning late under such circumstances were not onerous. The worst penalty was time in a light labor camp. Many get off with political reeducation, so he was trying to persuade this student to consider returning. However, if the DPRK government alleges contact with South Koreans or third-country nationals other than Chinese, the penalties are harsher, Tai concluded.

WICKMAN